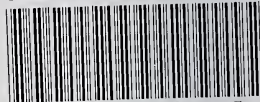




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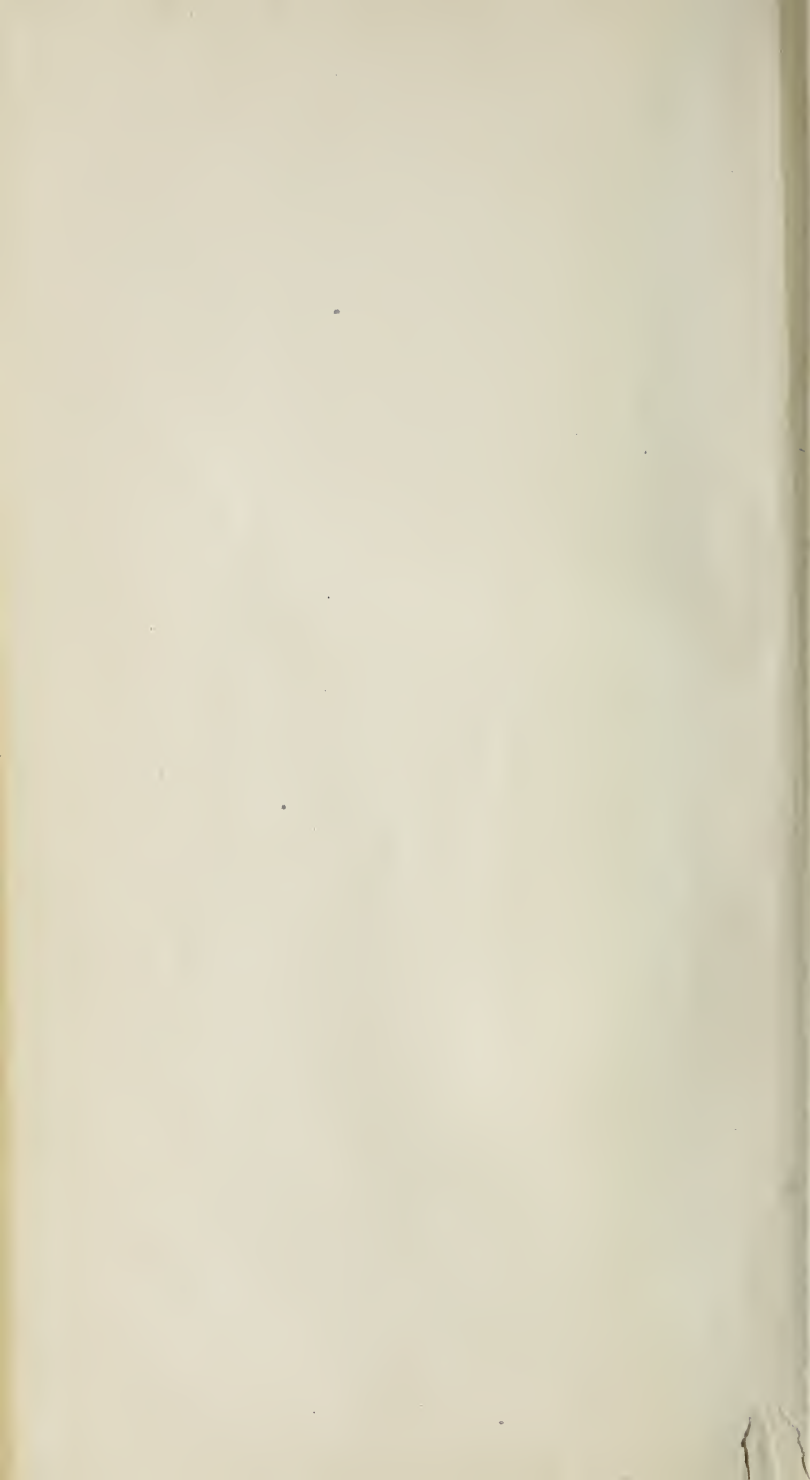
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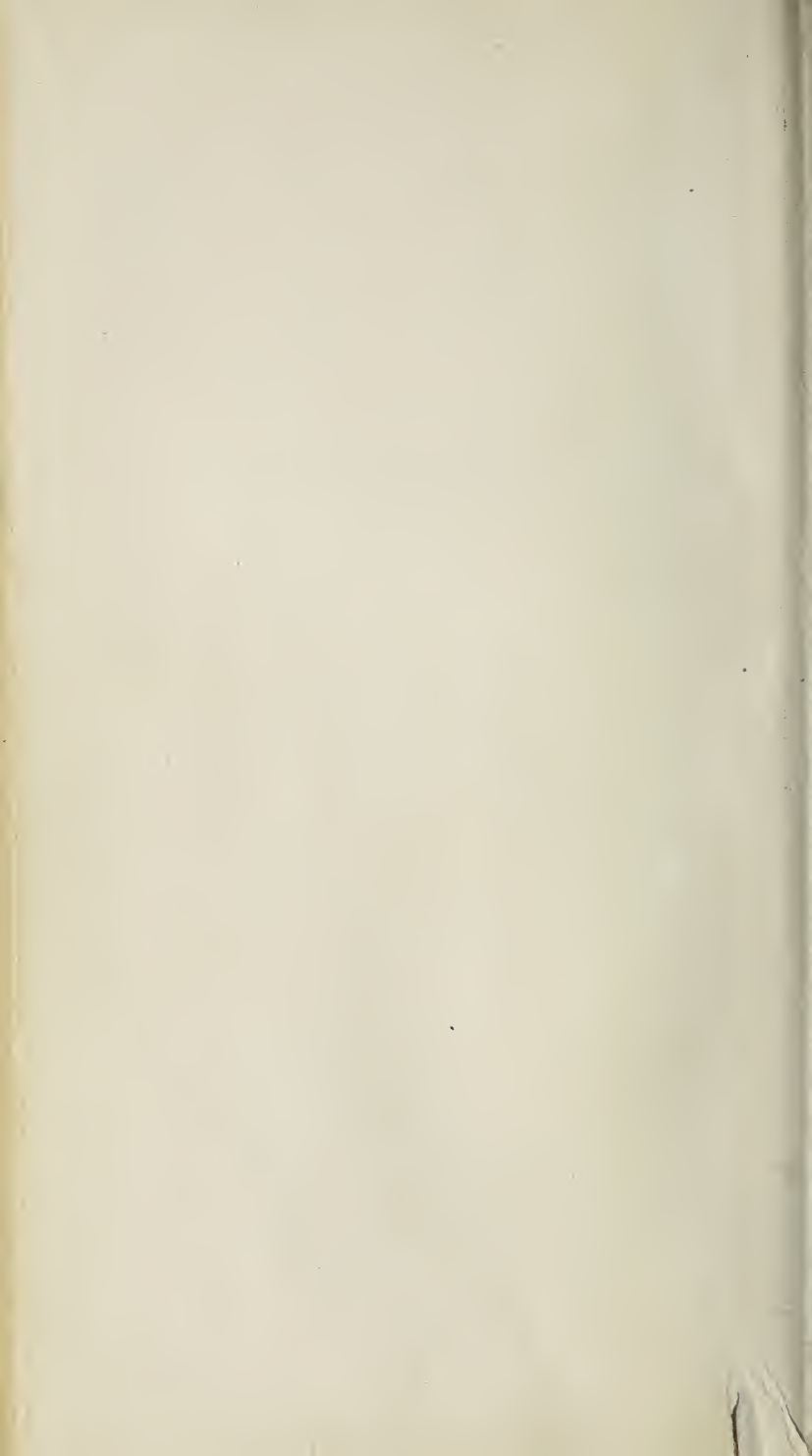






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KNIGHTHOOD AND CHIVALRY



# KNIGHTHOOD AND CHIVALRY

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BY  
REV. THOMAS H. MALONE

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DENVER, COLORADO

1910

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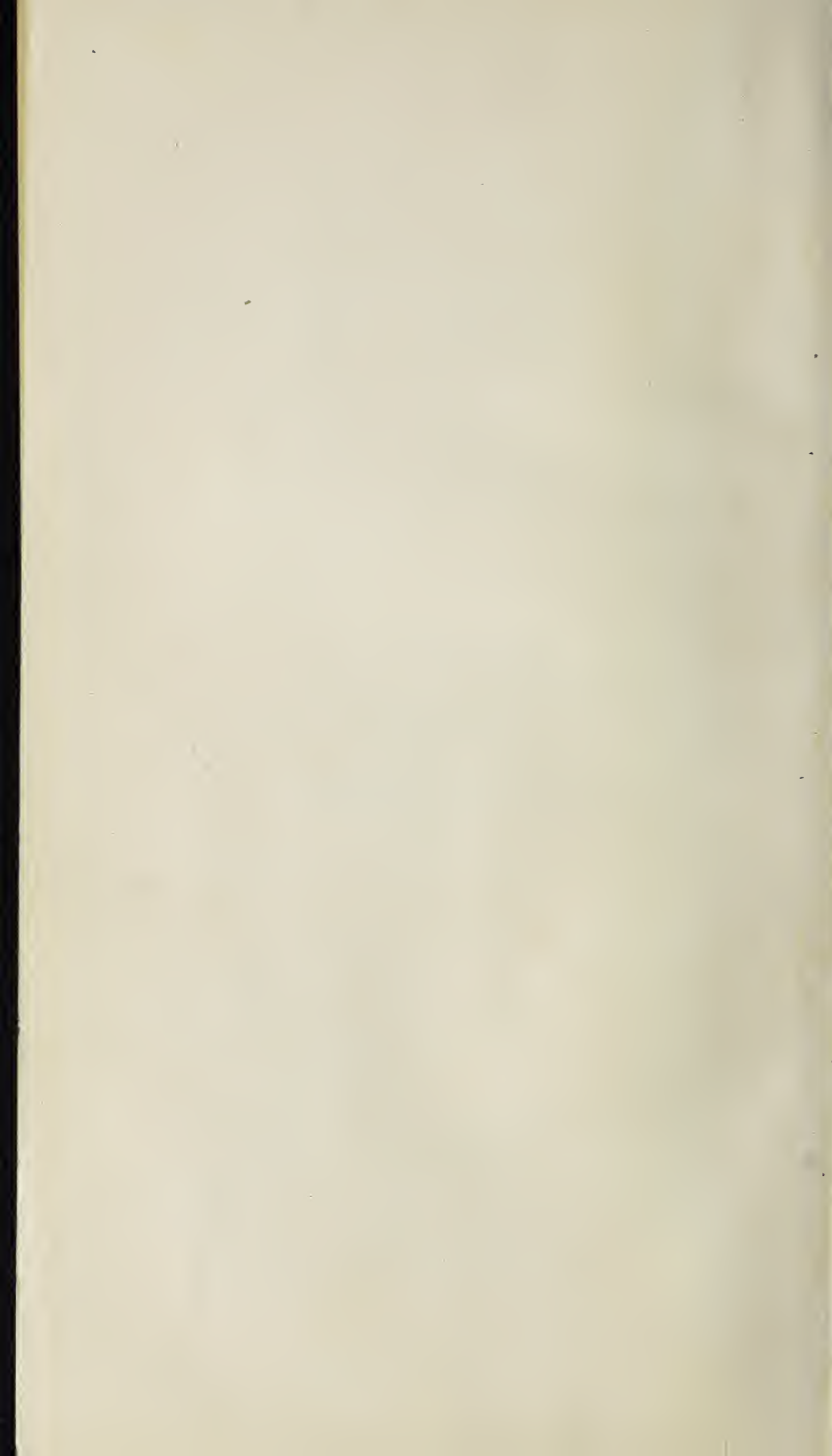
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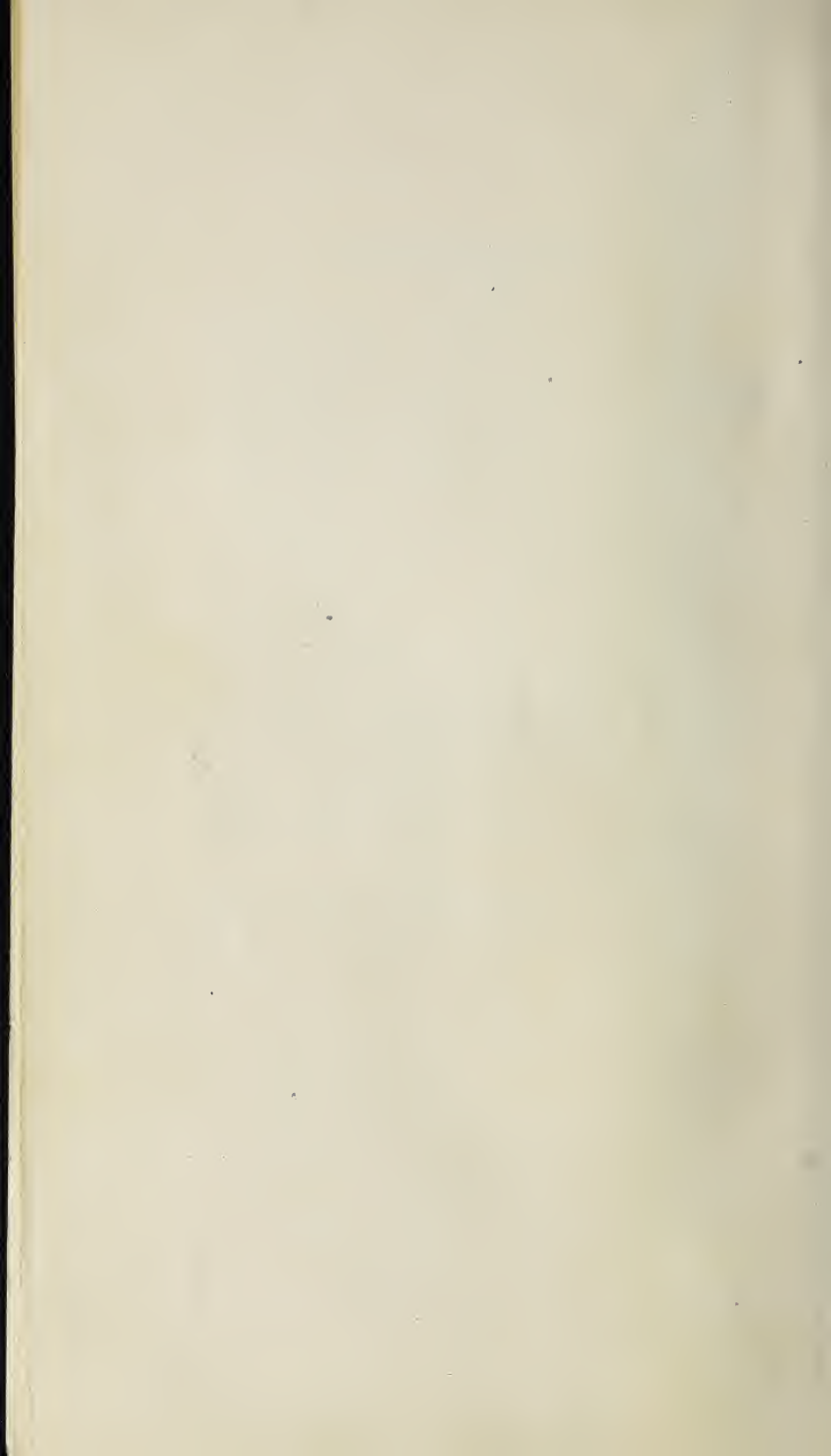


## INTRODUCTORY

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Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and color to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals; they supply them or they totally destroy them.

*Burke: Letters on a Regicide Peace. Letter i.*





## KNIGHTHOOD AND CHIVALRY

THE orders of Knighthood and the spirit of chivalry can hardly be understood without some knowledge of the times in which these institutions appeared and flourished. From the ordinary references to mediæval times and the so-called Dark Ages, we are apt to conclude that the world was, during that period, less than even semi-civilized,—worse, almost, than barbarous. But if we examine, no matter how casually, the institutions of those times, we will find that our boasted twentieth century enlightenment owes to them a debt impossible to calculate, absolutely immeasurable. Feudalism, monasticism, the guilds and other outgrowths of the wants and tastes of the Middle Ages, have their monuments still in existence, monuments of art and architecture, of science and



literature, that must and do command the attention of every person, even the most unobservant or the most bigoted.

But these material monuments, interesting and valuable as they are, take a rank second to the spirit which produced them—the feudal system—and to the spirit of chivalry, the humanizing influence of which is still felt, though the institution itself is centuries in the past.

The words “chivalry” and “knight-hood,” theoretically, are identical, since chevalier and knight are synonyms, but, practically, chivalry is applied to the whole body of ideas and customs which prevailed among the nobility, and knighthood to the estate itself. Its origin is to be found in the primeval customs of the barbarous German and Gallic tribes which overran all of western Europe, and whose customs and habits



previous to that time have not been preserved by historical records.

Feudalism was at first a host of petty tyrannies, whose mutual aims and interests often clashed, and brought about a condition of constant war, in a small way. The knight in those days was a freeman of the tribe who possessed a horse, and all of these were commanded to bear arms. The Germans were not a riding people, but the Goths had found out the usefulness of the horse soldier in their conflicts with the Romans, and it was for this reason that each leader of a tribe had attached to him personally a body of these freeman knights. Every youth born of free parents, on attaining military age, was admitted to the militia of his tribe, was invested with the warrior's spear and buckler, and all the other accoutrements of war,—the belt being the last and most important symbol of knighthood.



The chief held of his sovereign on condition of service, the knight of his chief in the same way. The land he held was his foeff, hence the derivation of "feudal."

As feudal chiefs were frequently at enmity, their retainers were so many armed soldiers under the direction of the chiefs. Their castles were fortresses as well as palaces. The use of arms was not only natural, but necessary, and the military institution of chivalry was the result. In a state of more or less constant insecurity, military discipline must not be relaxed even in the intervals of peace, and the tilts and tournaments of mimic warfare were kept up for the amusement of the knights, when not engaged in the serious duties of their estates. Thus it will be seen that the military institution of chivalry, confirmed with oath and ceremonial, was a development of the feudal constitution, and the Gothic cavalier was



the lineal ancestor of all the knights of the Middle Ages.

The existence of chivalry as an institution de facto differentiated from the customs and sentiments which fostered its growth, of established form and order and authority, may be dated from a time just previous to the first crusade. The western nations had begun to show the influence of the church, the Normans had infused their innovating spirit into past systems and customs, the claims of the Papacy for universality and unity had been asserted and maintained, the feudal system of holding lands was established as an organized institution, and the aristocracies of rank and military service, with their tournaments and adventures, had established something like a fraternity of arms in the military and landed classes throughout Europe. At this time knighthood was esteemed a reward of





valor, a sign of noble birth, a title to land, and carried with it an obligation of reciprocal service and protection, a tie of brotherhood in arms, a religious bond, blessed by the church.

In its beginnings, all within the class of freemen were equal,—and upon this equality was based the equality of knighthood,—for all admitted to knighthood were made equals by the very fact of their knighthood, whatever difference of descent or rank might exist among them. The feudal system of land tenure tended to develop an aristocracy indeed, but for all that, the idea, the principle of equality, was never lost sight of, and the equality of all knights, irrespective of degree, was maintained through all the vicissitudes of the rise, decline and fall of the institution as one of the fundamentals of chivalry.



## REVERENCE FOR WOMANHOOD.

Later the doctrine of love became an essential part of chivalry, expressed in every phase of social life, war and literature. Knighthood gained in dignity by becoming romantic, and though this sentiment became, in the long run, exaggerated and senseless, the romantic character remained always an integral part of chivalry. A knight's duty was "To fear God, and to love the ladies," or, as a quaint little French verse has it—

"My soul to God,  
My life to my king,  
My heart to the ladies,  
My honor to myself."

The oath of the knight was really one of service to his God and to society,—to protect the oppressed and to uphold the right. The first requisite was a solemn vow "to speak the truth, to succor the helpless and



oppressed, and never to turn back from an enemy." This vow and the solemn appeal to hearers in witness thereof was the very cornerstone of knighthood.

The religion of chivalry was perforce the Christian religion, and it was Catholic faith that imparted life and grace to its every manifestation. It was the foundation, the pervading spirit, the vital principle of early chivalry. From it came the fervor of heroism, the contempt for riches, the regard for woman, the zeal of loyalty, the constancy of friendship, the sentiment of honor which distinguishes it at its best period. Chivalry was, indeed, the handmaid of religion, and though the ideals of perfection sought by religion were never realized by chivalry, a standard of excellence was consciously set up and recognized, the influence of which is still felt,





though the thing itself is centuries behind us.

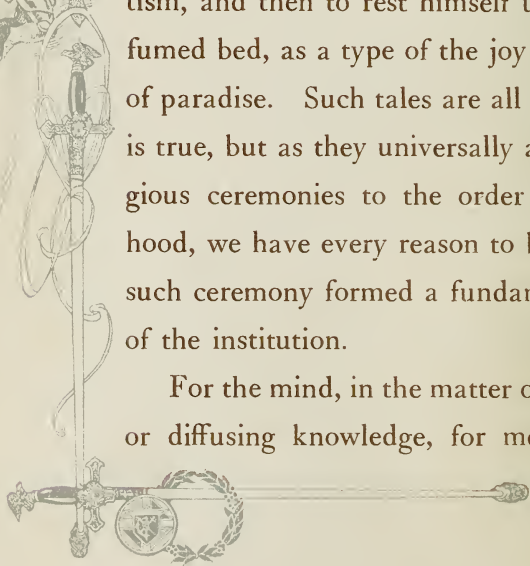
And this is a truth that is largely forgotten by many people in our age; the ideal gentleman is nothing more than the ideal Christian. If, when we meet in times of broil and battle with exquisite courtesy accompanying high courage and unselfishness and consideration for others, we curiously ask whence such gentle thoughts were produced, we shall find their source and motive in Christianity; just as they were the finer Christians, they were the finer knights and more perfect gentlemen. Knighthood had its foolish and fantastic human mannerisms; its admirable qualities and true substance were rooted in Christian faith.

In all the ballads, romances, fabliaux, sirventes, not one instance is to be found in which a squire becomes a knight without some reference to his religious faith. If he



be dubbed on the battle field, he swears to defend the right, and to maintain all the statutes of the noble order of chivalry. Upon the cross of his sword he calls heaven to witness his vow, and the saints to help him in its execution. In one of the most absurd fables of the chivalrous ages, wherein we find Saladin himself receiving the order of chivalry from the hands of the Count de Taberie, the nobleman causes the infidel to be shaved and to bathe as a symbol of baptism, and then to rest himself upon a perfumed bed, as a type of the joy and repose of paradise. Such tales are all fictitious, it is true, but as they universally ascribe religious ceremonies to the order of knighthood, we have every reason to believe that such ceremony formed a fundamental part of the institution.

For the mind, in the matter of acquiring or diffusing knowledge, for mental disci-



pline, chivalry did little, though its influence did much. For the heart, it did everything; and there can be no doubt but that knight-hood, the institution of chivalry, more than any other influence (except religion) aided to work out the civilization of Europe. Except Christianity, it is the best school of moral discipline, and the only institution for the benefit of society at large, known to the Middle Ages. Now chivalry, as I have already said, was more a spirit than an institution. The outward forms were only the signs by which it was conventionally agreed that those persons who had proved that they possessed the spirit should be distinguished from the other classes of society. The ceremonial was merely the public declaration that he on whom the order was conferred was worthy to exercise the powers with which it invested him, but still, the SPIRIT was the chivalry. Every moral



virtue became a part of knightly honor; valor was a necessity and became a habit; gluttony and intemperance were strictly forbidden; the peculiar grace of manner which we call courtesy formed a principal perfection of the knightly character; a knight who would be guilty of an untruth was looked upon as capable of treachery or cowardice; therefore an exalted sense of personal honor became his highest attribute. It is related that Henry, surnamed the Fowler, at the institution of the first tournament in Germany, proclaimed that, "No one was to be admitted to that most honorable of amusements who did not profess Christianity, who had been known to be guilty of perjury, treason, slaughter in cold blood, sacrilege or the violation of women."

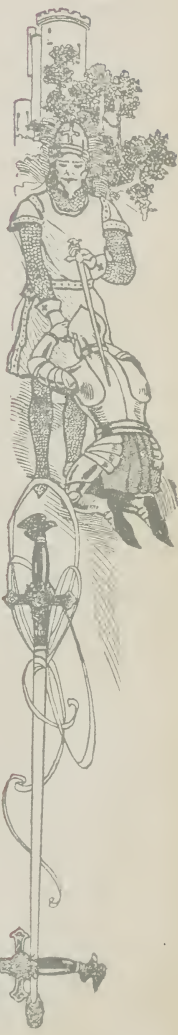
It can therefore readily be seen that the men whose hands were ever ready to draw the sword in defense of innocence and



weakness, whose watchwords were truth and faith and loyalty, who in their own conduct set the most brilliant example, whose sole object was the establishment of right, and over whom no earthly fear or interested consideration held sway, these men could not fail to be exalted above other men by common consent, by public opinion, even were there no oath or ceremonial.

Such a man was the foremost military figure of the first Crusade, Godfrey of Bouillon. After Jerusalem was taken, he was chosen, apparently by the unanimous voice of those who had a suffrage, as the first Christian king of Jerusalem. Even the infidel Gibbon, who writes of Christians nothing good that he can help, says of Godfrey and his government:

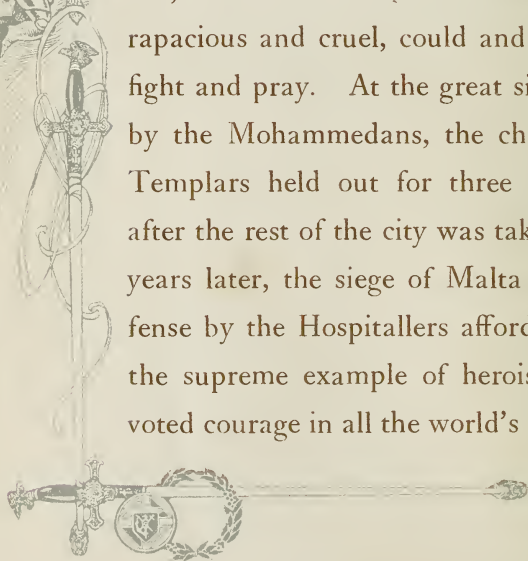
“The spirit of freedom, which pervades the feudal institutions, was felt in its strongest energy by the volunteers of the cross,





who elected for their chief the most deserving of his peers. Amidst the slaves of Asia, unconscious of the lesson or example, a model of political liberty was introduced; and the laws of the French kingdom are derived from the purest source of equality and justice."

Not all knights were like Godfrey; but at least those not like him looked up to and acknowledged him as a model of knight-hood. Even the Templars and Hospitalers, if in the course of time they became rapacious and cruel, could and did always fight and pray. At the great siege of Acre by the Mohammedans, the church of the Templars held out for three whole days after the rest of the city was taken. Many years later, the siege of Malta and its defense by the Hospitallers afforded perhaps the supreme example of heroism and devoted courage in all the world's history. In



every Crusade for centuries there were examples of the “very parfait gentil knight”, down to the time when St. Louis of France breathed his last upon the sands of Africa before the walls of Carthage.

“In St. Louis there was a rare combination of personal accomplishments, and even of apparently opposite qualities, which made him not only superior to his age, but confessedly one of the most extraordinary men that ever wore a crown. His love for religious exercises was never an obstacle to the fulfillment of his public duties. His uncommon piety, his simplicity of manners, and meekness in private life never prevented him from being a faithful dispenser of justice, a wise legislator, an intrepid warrior, and a dignified monarch. Not only France, but all Europe, and also popes, kings and emperors, entertained for him the highest respect. He won the admira-



tion even of that Asiatic prince, called Le Vieux de la Montagne, from whom the other crowned heads had so much to fear for their lives; and of those terrible Mamelukes of Egypt whose prisoner he was, and who once, as is commonly believed, deliberated whether they should appoint him their sovereign. In a word, Louis IX, by practising every royal, military and Christian virtue in an eminent degree, was at the same time a great king, a great hero, and a great saint. Innumerable witnesses bore testimony to his unblemished morals and piety; and no later than the year 1297, the 27th after his death, he was solemnly canonized by Pope Boniface VIII."

Foolish as our material age may deem their aim, wasteful as they were of themselves, and of Europe's best blood, yet the Crusaders, the Templar Knights who took the cross to fight for an empty tomb and a



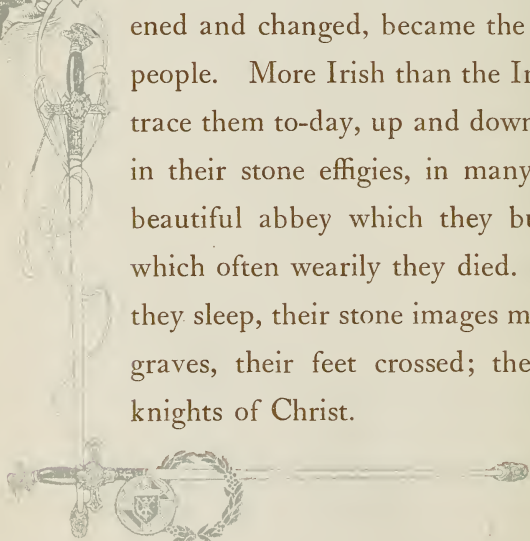


holy memory, because of their self-sacrifice and their motive, will ever win the thrill and admiration of the noblest human hearts.

The story of the Norman knights is also tempting; would be worth telling at length if our limits permitted; they were a people, we can not call them a race, who more than any other have profoundly affected the story of the world. Rude and greedy, some of them marched across Europe when William the Conqueror was a child, and overcame Sicily and southern Italy. With success they became wonderfully changed to men of courtesy and kindness and high practice and deep religion. Again, a great body of them with William crossed the narrow sea to England; greedy, also, iron and pitiless, these were at first, but when they had conquered England they became the protectors of the weak, the strong lovers of justice, and the devoted followers of Christ.



With Richard, the Lion-Hearted, they fought the Saracen for the holy places, and, oh! how glorious they were when they stood there at Runnymede by the great Archbishop Langton, and, not for their own order alone, but for ignoble hind and serf, for every Englishman, they wrested the Great Charter of Freedom from the tyrant John. Some of these marvelous Norman Knights, the Fitzgeralds, the De Burgos, the Butlers, the De Courcys, crossed to Ireland and smote it pitilessly, and then, softened and changed, became the idols of the people. More Irish than the Irish you can trace them to-day, up and down the island, in their stone effigies, in many a sad and beautiful abbey which they built, and in which often wearily they died. And there they sleep, their stone images marking their graves, their feet crossed; they were the knights of Christ.



“He who seeks to be a knight,” said the Bishop of Valenciennes to the young Count of Ostrerant, on the occasion of his knighthood, “he who wishes to be a knight should have great qualities. He must be of noble birth, liberal in gifts, high in courage, strong in danger, secret in council, patient in difficulties, powerful against enemies, prudent in his deeds. He must also swear to observe the following rules: To undertake nothing without having heard mass, fasting; to spare neither his blood nor his life in defense of the Catholic faith; to give aid to all widows and orphans; to undertake no war without just cause; to favor no injustice, but to protect the innocent and oppressed; to be humble in all things; to seek the welfare of those placed under him; never to violate the rights of his sovereign, and to live irreprehensibly before God and man.”



And the words of the Bishop of Valencienues are just as applicable to the knights of to-day as they were centuries ago to the noble Count of Ostrerant.

I need not go into any discussion of the causes which brought about the decline and fall of chivalry. It is sufficient to say that it did decline and gradually fell into disuse and contempt.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new;  
And God fulfills Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

Though we can not regret the change, still when into our different world there comes with the romance and chivalry the atmosphere of knighthood, the knight of the Middle Ages, we are mightily attracted.

One such came in the dawn of the nineteenth century, the romantic young Irish



patriot, poet, orator, lover, Robert Emmet. His country was prostrate, and no hand seemed left to raise her. The good and the brave were banished or imprisoned, or had died on the scaffold or the battlefield.

Speaking of him in his soul-touching poem in prose on "Broken Hearts," Washington Irving says: "He was so young, so intelligent, so generous, so brave, so everything we are apt to like in a young man. His conduct, under trial, too, was so lofty and intrepid! The noble indignation with which he repelled the charge of treason against his country, the eloquent vindication of his name, and his pathetic appeal to posterity, in the hopeless hour of condemnation, all these entered deeply into every generous bosom, and even his enemies lamented the stern policy that dictated his execution."





He flung his young life, a seemingly useless sacrifice, on the altar of freedom, and not alone his own, but that of the gentle and beautiful girl he loved with the romance of the ancient world.

“He had lived for his love; for his country  
he died;  
They were all that to earth had entwined  
him;  
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be  
dried,  
Nor long shall his love stay behind him.”

One came into our own history in the middle of the last century. He fought, indeed, for a wrong cause, but one judges him by his motives, the call of his beloved state, the cry of his own people; when we look at his whole life, so brave and gentle was he, so courteous and considerate, so ready to feel and share the sorrows of others, we must confess that General Robert E. Lee



was the mediæval knight straying into another age.

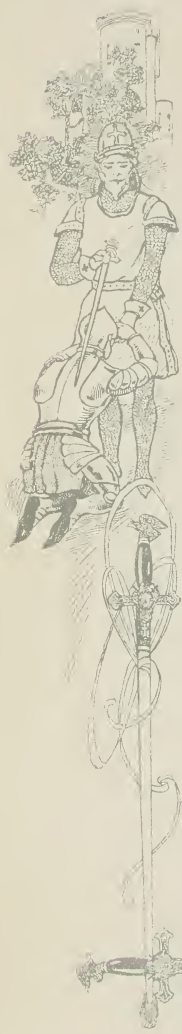
And, again, the character of the great Englishman, William Ewart Gladstone, always appeared to be haloed with the romance of ancient knighthood; so fine was he in his Christian ideals, so patient and courageous, so able to take the commonplace things of a commonplace generation, and show their greatness in their utility to human service. And, at the last, because "He revered his conscience as his king," that he might assist a people that were not his, as the champion of their cause, the knight, burning to right their wrongs, he flung away the friendship of many who loved him, and lost that lofty place in the world, the premiership of the British Empire.

No! Knighthood has not altogether passed; it has changed its form; the shadow



has departed; the substance remains. Its refining and humanizing influence is still felt. The records of its honors are now the merest empty names; but we are not yet so steeped in the materialism of modern times as not to enjoy the tales of knightly valor and chivalrous devotion of the mediæval hero. Our gentler emotions and higher aspirations can still be stirred by the recitals of Dante and Boiardo and Ariosto and Tasso and Milton and Spenser, at the adventures of the knights of Arthur's Court, at the loves of ladies and at tilts and tournaments. King Arthur made his knights lay their hands in his and swear:

“To reverence the King, as though he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as  
their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,





To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honor his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for, indeed, I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable  
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a  
man."

We need regret the departure of mediæval chivalry the less in that a more glorious era of equality is in process of development. We live in times less romantic, to be sure, but more fortunate. Law and order are the watchwords of our twentieth century's civilization, and social science the most absorbing study, for there is no denying the fact



that the public is to-day more interested in social questions than in anything else.

The individual has his own private and particular ambition, but that aggregate of individuals known as the public is the force to be reckoned with, and that public is solving social problems in fields of labor, science commerce, industry and human relations in every sphere of life.

The statesman is a power, but this force controls his eloquence and directs the influence of his counsels—this public welfare. Indeed, it may be questioned whether this has not been the case all through the history of the world. The mediæval knight may not have had in mind, and most probably did not, primarily the improvement of society when he set out to win personal glory. The social issue was not recognized as such, and was given comparatively little thought, but the result was the same; the



only difference is that we recognize the fact that the betterment of society is the real issue, where the mediæval mind did not.

The systems and institutions of our country and of our time, the composite character of our nation and generation, would act as insurmountable obstacles in our path were we to try to impose mediæval knighthood and chivalry upon modern times. But as the institution originally acted as a social force of the first order in fields of moral and social discipline, so may its spirit act upon the century now unfolding before us.

To be sure, the various religions and systems of philosophy of the past three or four centuries have been molded upon new principles, so-called, and the rules of human conduct, as well as the attitude of the public mind, are not in harmony with the spirit and sentiment of mediæval chivalry. We



spell "Honor" in a new way, without a capital, and with one letter less, and we practise it, too, I am afraid, in a new way, without the vitality of its capital sense, and with more than one of its original factors omitted. We talk about it and make a great pretense of abiding by its laws, while we outrage the spirit of those laws. Few of us, indeed, could say, as Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, said to King Richard the Second: "Mine honor is my life; both grow in one. Take honor from me and my life is done."

In these days we thank heaven that we are infinitely better, far more enlightened, immeasurably superior to our forefathers of the Middle Ages. My friends, "beware of cant." Are we better? And how, pray? Do we more than fulfill the condition imposed in the words of the Bishop of Valenciennes: "To live irreprehensibly before God and man?" In that command is com-



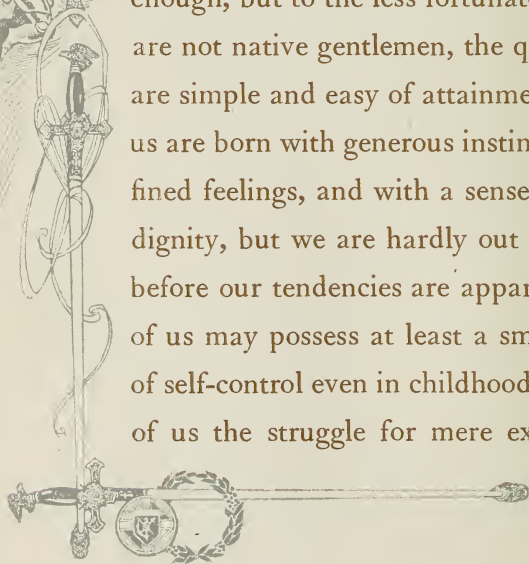
prised the whole duty of a Christian and a gentleman.

Now, I am not unaware of the fact that the word "gentleman" is a very much-abused word, in these days of superficial politeness and artificial courtesy, nor am I unmindful of the fact that you are all as well aware of it as I am. But wait a moment and give it your serious consideration. The words "Christian gentleman" contain the whole sum of social philosophy. I mean when taken in their true sense. Observe I did not say a Christian hero; this is not an heroic age, and few of us are called upon to be Christian heroes, in the sense that Father Damien was a hero, for example. Few of us, indeed, would be willing or able to act thus, if we were called upon. But to be a Christian gentleman, to recognize one's duty to one's self, to one's fellow man, and to one's Creator, and, having recognized





these duties, to practise them, is so easy that one is amazed that intelligent men should ever be anything else. The mere motive of human policy would suggest the imprudence of being willing to be thought otherwise. The title of gentleman originally carried with it high distinction in a world where the men prized truth and honor, and the women gentleness and chastity, far above life or all that life could offer. That there are native gentlemen is true enough, but to the less fortunate of us, who are not native gentlemen, the qualifications are simple and easy of attainment. Few of us are born with generous instincts, with refined feelings, and with a sense of personal dignity, but we are hardly out of pinafores before our tendencies are apparent, and all of us may possess at least a small measure of self-control even in childhood. To many of us the struggle for mere existence, the



exertion and labor of providing for material necessities, may seem to excuse us from the daily and hourly observation of the golden rule which underlies all true courtesy. Self-interest will suggest the doctrine of "each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." Indolence will whisper that our one little individuality counts for nothing at all in the sum of human events. Grant you all that. It is the twentieth century attitude of mind; but the most modest individual amongst us will be able to convince himself, without undue effort, that he is of the highest consequence to *himself*. Again, no one is so small or so unimportant that he does not exert some influence upon the people about him even by the expression of his countenance, by the clothes he wears, or by his manner of wearing them.

Do we not all find it pleasanter to see cheerful faces than doleful ones, whether we



know their owners or not? Is it not far more agreeable in the crowds and crushes of the world to brush against the neat than the slovenly? Are we not all affected by the sullenness, the ill-humor, the discontent of our fellow workman? All this is very trifling, you say, but is it? "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle," said Michael Angelo.

We all have powers of the mind as well as powers of the body. That constitutes our humanity.. But the powers of the mind are far more docile and flexible to our will than are those of the body, and the difference between men, in all that constitutes the gentleman and the Christian, is a matter of the relative force of the development of these powers in each individual.

The first step in the direction of true knighthood, that is, in the direction of the real gentleman, is to-day precisely the same





as it was ten centuries ago, i. e., the recognition of the simple, plain, self-evident fact that we live in society and are subject to human responsibility in respect of that fact.

As uncouthness of manner, ferocity of spirit and general barbarity were minimized under the influence of the mediæval knighthood, so may the materialism, the self-seeking and brazen greed of our own days be counteracted by the modern type of knighthood.

Human nature has the same motives and aspirations at all times, differing only in degree and relative proportion. But human conditions change, and it is for us to adapt the ideals of all perfect knighthood to our conditions and circumstances.

The desire of political power, personal ambition, greed of money, the development of political and social institutions, the rivalry of classes and races, the growth of



commerce and civic interests, the establishment of international trade, all these were factors in the sum of human agencies in the tenth and twelfth centuries as they are in the twentieth.

The rivalries of domestic and international trade in this commercial age are quite as absorbing and exciting as the rivalries for the favors of fair dames were to our predecessors.

As the mediæval knight must be a soldier first and last and all the time, so must the present-day knight be a soldier, though he fights the battles of peace, the social and industrial, commercial and moral battles that result in increased happiness for his fellow beings as well as for himself.

There is still ample scope for adventure and enterprise, though its pursuits be in other ways. There are still giants to kill, but they are giants of intemperance and



sensuality, of falsehood and dishonor, of lawlessness and licentiousness, of ignorance and vice.

The obligation of veracity is not less universal and not less binding on modern society than on mediæval. To break one's knightly word was a disgrace, and in this respect our later civilization has much to learn from the Middle Ages, for what was laid down then as a rule for knights and gentlemen was accepted by universal consent as a universal obligation. Indeed, there has never been a time when the virtue of good faith has not been held in highest esteem, and the contrary vice of falsehood or treachery abhorred. The sin of Judas is the capital crime of all history.

Dante, it may be remarked in passing, in his immortal poem, has a special corner of hell reserved for Judas and Brutus and Cassius. And, setting aside the question of



sin, the sentiment of honor, to which all meanness is detestable and foreign, and the sentiment of personal dignity, which prevents a man from ever lowering himself, not only in the opinion of others, but in his own, which never forgets what is due from himself to himself (the principle of "noblesse oblige" carried into every detail of daily life and deportment), all are excellent characteristics of the Christian gentleman in general and in particular and in all times.

Anent this matter of deportment, it is another instance in which we may take valuable lessons from the mediæval knight.

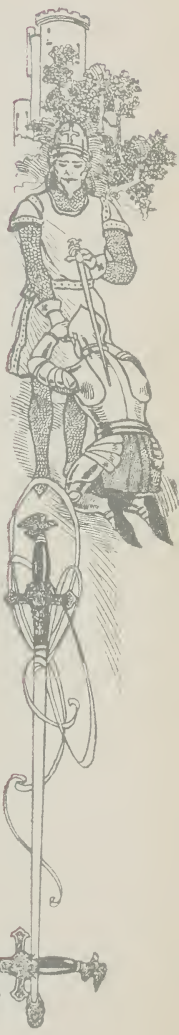
The development of the republican principle, the absence of an hereditary aristocracy with its privileges of rank and ceremonial, have had the effect of decreasing not only good manners themselves, but, also, to a certain extent, the respect entertained for good manners. And yet at no



time have the titles of gentleman and lady been quite so universally and persistently abused.

In the Dark (save the mark!) Ages, to be a gentleman was to be more than to be a man. The title connotes something substantial in the title of the man which exists as a reality, and this something is one of its manifestations, namely, good manners.

Now, the three modes in which we express ourselves towards those with whom we come in contact in the domestic and social relations of life are, by our actions, by our conversation and by our manners. The importance of our actions is too self-evident to need discussion; that of our conversation, though little less important, compels most of us to be at least cautious about offending general usage. Profanity and coarseness carry their own condemnation, and we all recognize the fact. But with re-



gard to our manners it will be questioned by some and doubted by many whether one's manners, good, bad or indifferent, have any moral bearing at all in the sum total of one's character.

The very foundation of good manners is the recognition of the eternal brotherhood of man; the essential rule of good manners and good breeding is practically the same as in other spheres. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Even though we ignore the commandment and act from lower motives, there are few of us who have not learned from experience that politeness, like honesty, is the best policy. With the well-bred, politeness is but an exchange of courtesy, while in dealing with the rude and ill-bred there is nothing quite so effectual for his disarming as to be calmly and persistently polite. As to the moral value of good manners and polished deport-





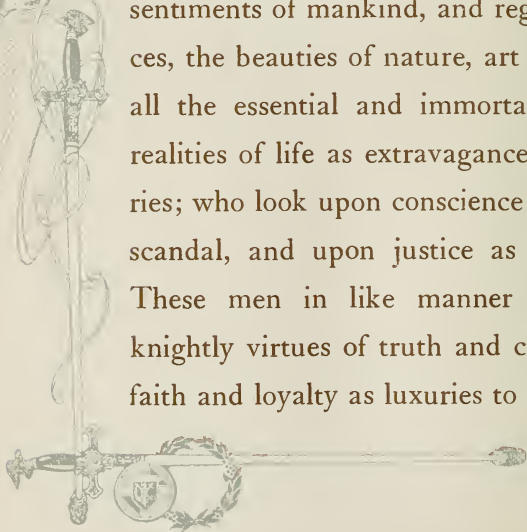
ment, it may be asserted that consistent and habitual politeness is to the moral being what personal cleanliness is to the physical.

Another virtue of our mediæval knight was that of hospitality, and hospitality in its true sense seems to be altogether dead. In these days we give large entertainments, to which we invite a host of people whom we don't know, many of whom we do not wish to know, but whose wealth or social position or professional ability we foolishly consider an ornament to our board. We all know that display and ostentation do not constitute hospitality, but vanity; the true hospitality will share a crust or a tent, or even will accept less than these where there is friendliness and welcome and congenial companionship. The knight of old shared even his dangers with his companion in arms.



To the spirit of chivalry, indeed, belong many qualities worthy of emulation, commanding praises which would appear a shade too enthusiastic. I might, were I categorically to count them, be met with the reproof, "Who says there are not?"

And yet there are men, and they form no small portion of society everywhere, who would try to convince us that the chivalrous life is the dream of an excited imagination, men who worship the gods of reason and expediency, who mock at the chivalrous sentiments of mankind, and regard romances, the beauties of nature, art and poetry, all the essential and immortal and ideal realities of life as extravagances and luxuries; who look upon conscience almost as a scandal, and upon justice as a delusion. These men in like manner regard the knightly virtues of truth and courtesy and faith and loyalty as luxuries to be indulged





in only once in a while, and then, for some reason of expediency. They will tell you that chivalry is dead. Nothing could be further from the fact, for no age can witness its utter and final extinction.

Systems of government, national institutions, combinations of circumstances may be more or less favorable to its development; what is accidental—the tilts, tournaments, banners, ceremonials—may pass, but what essentially belongs to it has its roots deep down in the nature of man and can not fail to endure.

The materialism of this age will pass away as the chivalry of the mediæval times has passed away, and for the same reason. Neither has contained within itself the capacity of satisfying the whole nature of mankind. Each will have contributed its portion, and each will have served its purpose. The twentieth century materialism will



probably leave as its contribution to future generations a more elevated and ideal estimation of health, physical, political, intellectual, social and moral—an increased cultivation of social responsibilities as the pursuit of earthly felicities—a rational appreciation of the value of money, not as an ideal to be worshipped, nor as an end to be sought in itself, but for its use in multiplying our capacities for happiness.

The lesson for us to apply is that as mediæval knighthood set up and maintained a standard before the eyes of the knightly class higher than any which had been known before, and as the recognition of this standard was an important factor in the progress of the world from barbarous to civilized life, so our knighthood should set up a standard and rule of conduct which will make us ashamed of our lower instincts and passions, which will put an end to bru-



talities and vices, which will place us before our fellow men as "chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche," who consider the foolishness of an ideal as wiser than the wisdom of the world.

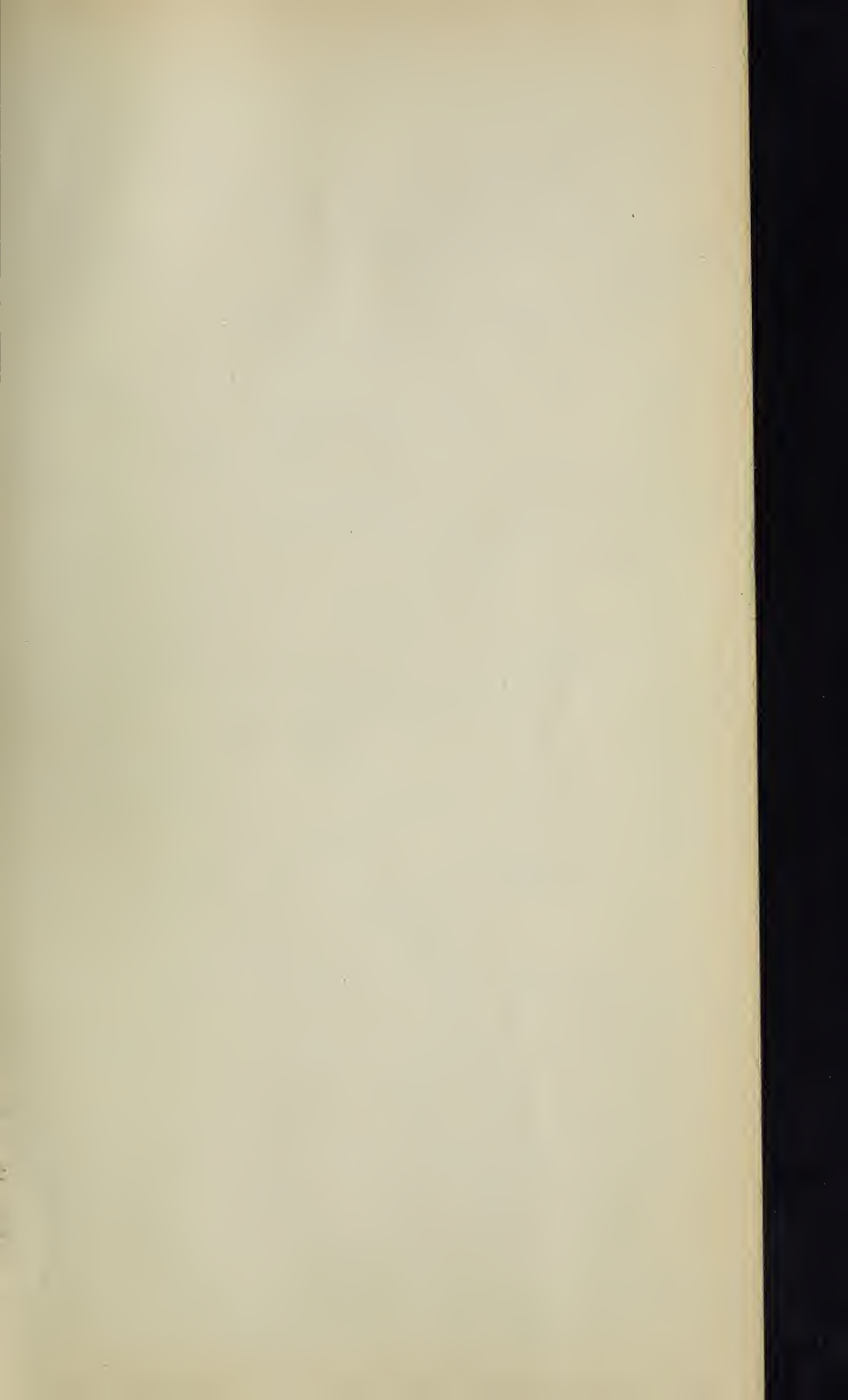
I said that there is still ample scope for adventure and enterprise. But it will require knights, valiant and strong, to overcome the enemy in the struggle where the combat will be with giants of intemperance, sensuality, falsehood, dishonor, lawlessness, licentiousness, ignorance and vice. This is what confronts the Catholic organization which has assumed to itself the exalted and dignified title of Knights of Columbus.

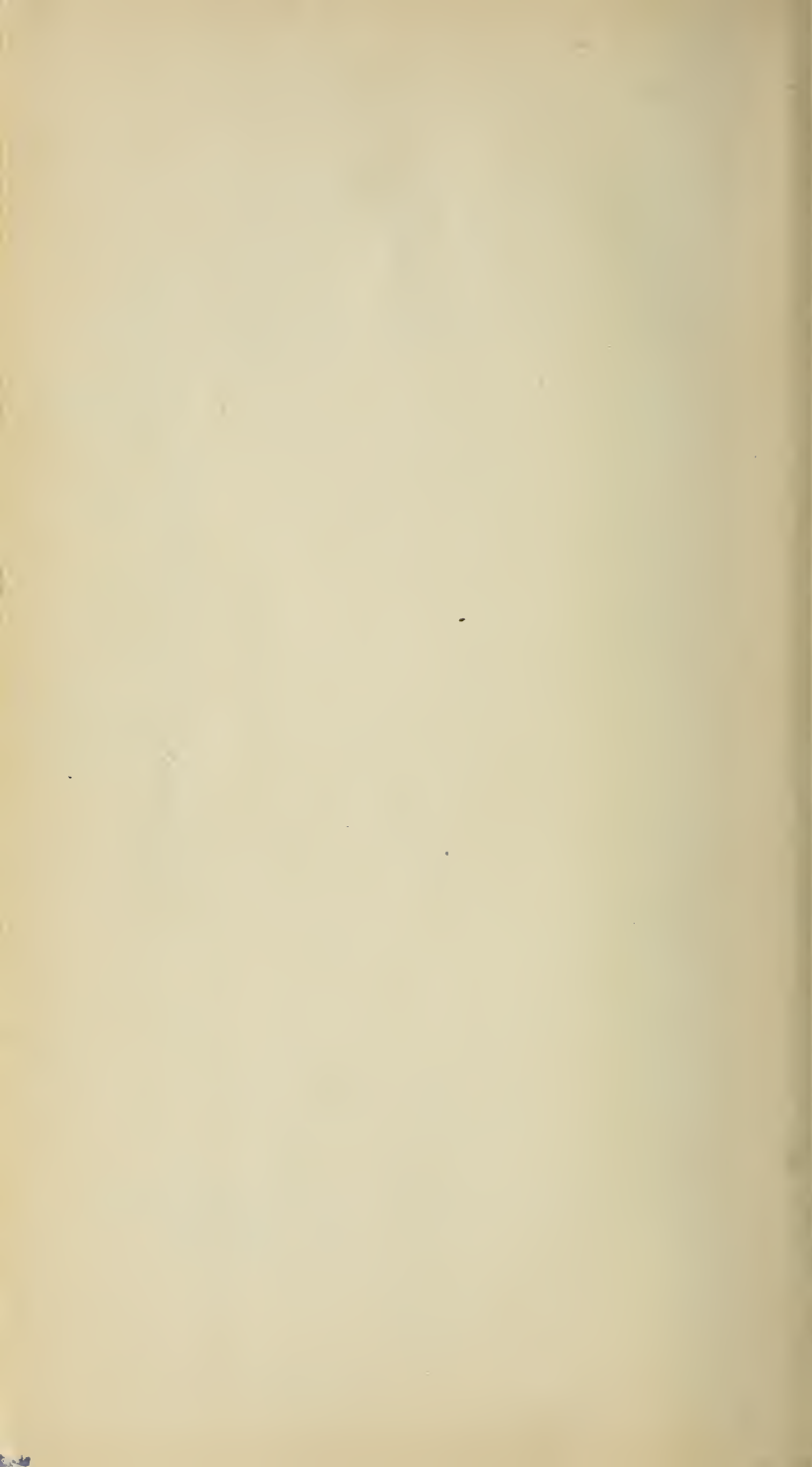
The conflict will be watched with as keen an interest as were the tilts and tournaments of ancient chivalry, and the result will be of greater import to the human race. It may be that from the ranks of this modern knightly order there will come forth in this

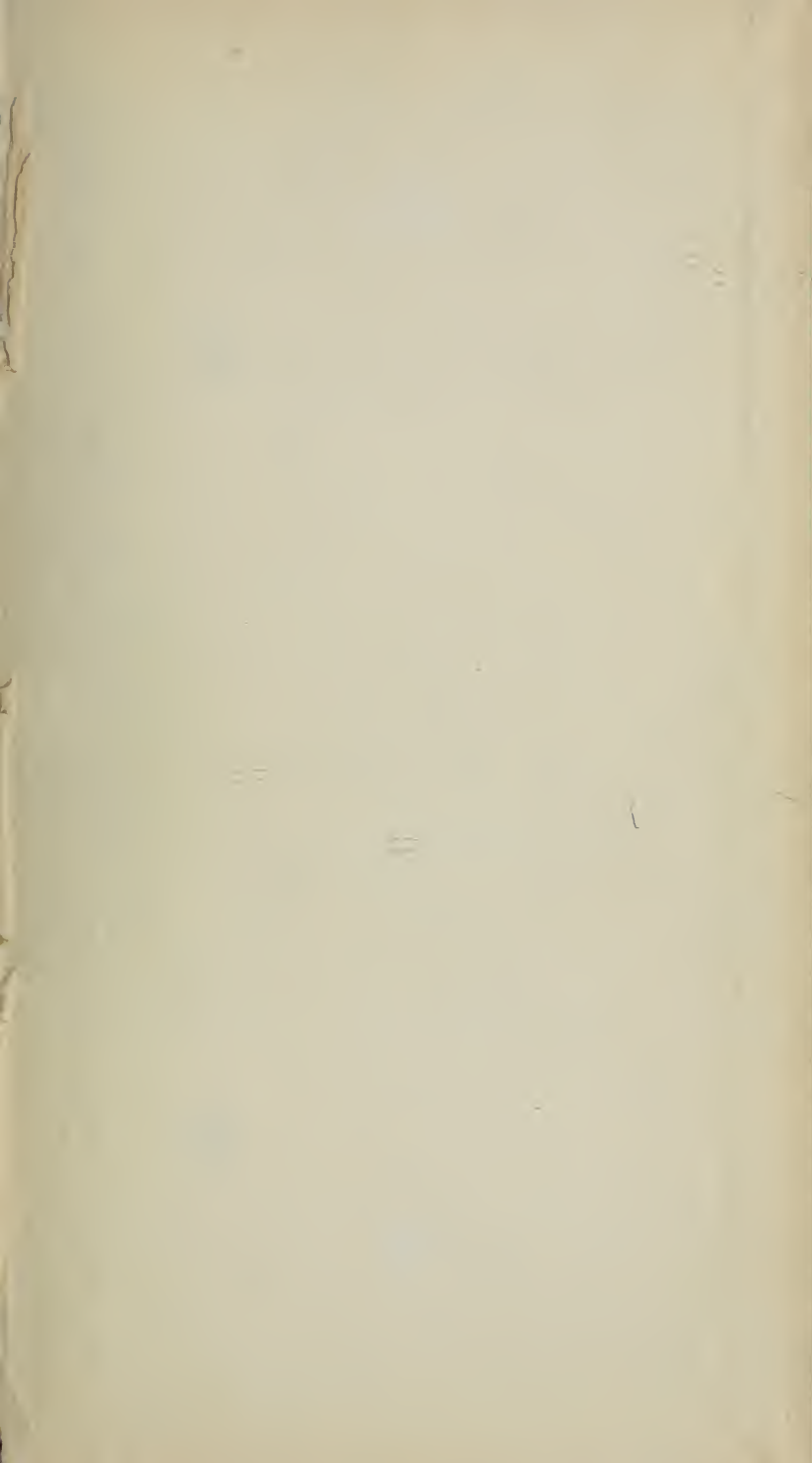


or a future age some American, so knightly and valiant and strong, that from his bow the arrows, with aim direct, shall strike down these giants that are so harmful to the world.











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